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AMICUS CURIAE LAUNCHED

Commenting on the launch of *Amicus Curiae* on its own pages might appear to some a little self-serving if not incestuous. Nonetheless, the launch of our new journal is a matter of such importance to the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies and the new Society for Advanced Legal Studies, that it would be wrong for us to let it pass unrecorded within our own covers. CCH Editions, our publishers, generously hosted a cocktail reception at the Middle Temple on 29 October 1997 to launch *Amicus Curiae*. This happy event was followed by a splendid dinner attended by some 230 guests at the Inn to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the Institute and the inauguration of the Society. We were particularly delighted by the level of support that this dinner attracted, not least from senior members of the judiciary. We were also delighted to learn that some members of the Society had journeyed from as far away as Pennsylvania and Stockholm to be with us.

Toasts to the Institute and Society were proposed by Professor Aubrey Diamond, a former Director of the Institute and Lord Steyn, President of the Society's Advisory Council. Professor Terry Daintith, the former Director and now Dean of the School of Advanced Study introduced Lord Nolan who delivered the address, with Lord Justice Millett responding and Professor Sir David Williams, the former Vice Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, proposing a vote of thanks. Lord Nolan, as Chairman of the Institute's Advisory Board, referred to the IALS's heritage and national role in promoting and facilitating legal research. He pointed out that although it is proper that we regard this year as the true fiftieth anniversary of the Institute's foundation, one has to admit that it was formally established as a Senate Institute of the University of London on 1 October 1946. However, it was not until the following year that Professor Sir Hughes Parry was appointed, by the then Vice Chancellor, as the Institute's first Director and the show really got on the road. Indeed, it was not until the spring of 1948 that the Institute found a permanent home in Russell Square.

Lord Nolan pointed out that the idea for a national Institute, housing what is our national law library, with a brief to promote and facilitate research in law at an advanced level, both nationally and internationally, can be traced back to a speech delivered in Lincoln's Inn, by the then Lord Chief Justice, Lord Russell of Killowen, on 28 October 1895. Lord Russell called upon the Inns of Court to take the initiative in establishing such an institution, which in a later speech he described as an Imperial Law School, able and willing to serve the Empire. The seeds that Lord Russell and others planted grew and blossomed. Not least among which was the then Lord Chancellor Lord Sankey's appointment of an expert committee on Legal Education, under Lord Atkin, in August 1932. This important committee was charged to consider not only the organisation of legal education but also 'further provision for advanced research in legal studies'.

The committee discovered considerable support, not only in the academic world (and in particular from the Society of Public Teachers in Law – SPTL), but also within the professions for the establishment of 'an institution which would be a headquarters for academic research and would promote the advancement of knowledge of the law in the most general terms' and in particular on a comparative basis. Professor Harold Laski, in an addendum to the committee's *Report* expressed the hope that 'the creation of an Institute of Advanced Legal Research will be regarded by the professional bodies in the Law as a paramount part of their functions'. Indeed, Professor Laski and Professor Glanville Williams both emphasised the importance of the Institute undertaking 'clinical' and applied research. Lord Nolan expressed the view that the creation of the new Society, which would devote itself to promoting and facilitating in particular collaborative research projects of interest not only to academia, but also those who practised and administered the law, was very much in line with the hopes and aspirations of those early and most distinguished promoters of the IALS.

Professor Barry Rider